

Steven Feld introduced the concept of 'acoustemology' in the early 1990s, conjoining 'acoustic' and 'epistemology' in order to pursue the social study of sound as a way of knowing and being in the world. In doing so, Feld provided a new and extended vocabulary for the discussion of music and sound on which anthropologists, ethnomusicologists and others increasingly draw. In a series of three public lectures, held on three subsequent days, Steven Feld will present the current state of his thinking. He will relate acoustemology to ongoing theoretical debates on globalization, neoliberal capitalism, environmental change and human-nonhuman interactions, and thereby show ways in which acoustemological approaches may contribute to better understand some of the most pressing questions of our times.



Steven Feld is Senior Scholar at the School for Advanced Research in Santa Fe, New Mexico. An anthropologist, filmmaker, musician, and sound artist, he is also Distinguished Professor of Anthropology Emeritus at the University of

New Mexico. His publications include the book *Sound and Sentiment: Birds, Weeping, Poetics, and Song in Kaluli Expression* and related CD and film *Voices of the Rainforest*; *Jazz Cosmopolitanism in Accra* with related five film and 10 CD series, and articles including *On Post-Ethnomusicology Alternatives: Acoustemology* in F. Giannattasio & G. Guiriati, *Ethnomusicology or Transcultural Musicology?*, *Doing Anthropology in Sound* (with Don Brenneis), in *American Ethnologist*; and *Waterfalls of Song: An acoustemology of place resounding in Bosavi*, in S. Feld & K. Basso, *Senses of Place*.

The Anthropology of Music Lecture Series is part of a new initiative to further strengthen and expand the focus on music at the Department of Anthropology and African Studies (ifeas) at the Johannes Gutenberg-University Mainz, Germany. Combining a public lecture series held by one of the field's most established representative with a master class designed for young researchers to present their works, this new format provides a unique opportunity to discuss ongoing research and reflect on the current state of anthropological engagements with music and sound. Different to the public lecture series, the master class is not open to the wider public. However, we welcome students and scholars with a special interest in the topic. For registration and further information please contact us at anthromusic@uni-mainz.de.

Department of Anthropology
and African Studies (ifeas)

Anthropology of Music
Lecture Series 2019

Acoustemology

with

Steven Feld

University of New Mexico
(USA)

organized by

ifeas Institut für Ethnologie und Afrikastudien

AMA

sponsored by

Rheinland-Pfalz MINISTERIUM FÜR WISSENSCHAFT, WEITERBILDUNG UND KULTUR

VolkswagenStiftung

JOHANNES GUTENBERG UNIVERSITÄT MAINZ JGU



June 26 - 28, 2019

JGU Mainz

Lecture 1

Jazz Cosmopolitanism in Accra, Revisited

Wednesday, June 26, 6 pm, Institut Français

By revisiting the acoustemology of urban and diasporic intimacy told in Feld's Jazz Cosmopolitanism in Accra project (book, 5 films, 10 CD recordings) this first lecture discusses the utility of »acoustemology« to the project of theorizing expansive agency against the persistence of historical binaries. Can »acoustemology« aid the project Frantz Fanon called »the always impossible«, the story of how colonialism grinds into the postcolony as a modernist machine for epistemological violence and categorical oppression?

The lecture is followed by the screening of Steven Feld's documentary concert film

Voices of the Rainforest

Wednesday, June 26, 8:30 pm, Ciné Mayence

This project uses the medium of sound to dialogically represent how the sounds of work and leisure songs, instrumental music, and ceremonial music produced by the Kaluli people were inspired by and performed with ambient biosphere sounds of the rainforest. The Kaluli people discuss the present state and fate of the forest and their hopes for a more equitable future. Here, »acoustemology« meets with the claims for »symmetrical« approaches to human-nonhuman interaction, as well as with ecological concerns.

Lecture 2

Nostalgia and/for Modernity

Thursday, June 27, 6 pm, Philosophicum, P5

The talk discusses the »alternate« or »bush« modernity of remote villagers in Bosavi today, people whose knowledge of the world and global capitalism is vastly out of alignment with their actual way of life in a five mile radius of their location of birth. It presents the world of Bosavi's younger generations, people with cellphones but no toilets, bank accounts but no money, and questions the use of new technologies by young people – guitars, ukuleles – to reinvent nostalgic music based on the poetic inheritance received from their parents and grandparents. »Acoustemological« approaches to music, sound and technology are here brought together with the local dynamics of globalization and neoliberal capitalism in rather remote places. The starting point of the lecture is a criss-cross moment when a Bosavi guitar band CD was confused by the media with post-9/11 Americana country music nostalgia.

Venue addresses:

Institut Français & CinéMayence:
Schillerstraße 11, Mainz

Philosophicum:
Jakob-Welder-Weg 18, Mainz

Lecture 3

Hearing Heat

Friday, June 28, 6 pm, Philosophicum, P5

This lecture comes back to the topic of the first lecture, in that it relates the story of climatic and environmental change in the Bosavi rainforest to global concerns about the Anthropocene. It takes a historical as well as comparative stance, however, in order to re-evaluate the theoretical contribution of »acoustemology« in relation to what is arguably the most important issue to the future of organic survival, environmental climate action. It might once have been considered a quaint oddity that Bosavi people sing to, about, and with birds, insects, and waterways. But now more than ever these eco-aesthetic practices explain music making as cartography, environmental data-gathering, and acute ecological observation. As a specific example, the lecture presents the history of cicadas, stimulated by light and heat, and songs sung to, with and about them in Bosavi. This history is juxtaposed with others, ancient (Greece) and modern (post-nuclear Japan), to link what was once a remote project in the anthropology of sound to a comparative discussion of sonic ecology in general.